

## 16 Am. Jur. 2d Constitutional Law § 8

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### Constitutional Law

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### I. Overview of Constitutional Law

#### C. Fundamental American Constitutional Documents

## § 8. Purpose, application, and effect of United States Constitution

[Topic Summary](#)   [Correlation Table](#)   [References](#)

### West's Key Number Digest

West's Key Number Digest, *Constitution Law* (500, 50)

### Treatises and Practice Aids

Constitutional Law Deskbook: Individual Rights § 1:6 (2d ed.) (Constitution of the United States of America)

The several states were in existence as separate sovereignties under the Articles of Confederation<sup>1</sup> prior to the adoption of the Constitution of the United States.<sup>2</sup> The Constitution brought into being a nation and a closer union rather than a league of separate states.<sup>3</sup> The Constitution was framed upon the theory that the peoples of the several states must sink or swim together and that in the long run, prosperity and salvation are in union and not division.<sup>4</sup>

Although providing for the common defense is one of the purposes of the Federal Constitution,<sup>5</sup> the Constitution was also intended to protect the people of the United States against arbitrary action by their own government.<sup>6</sup> It was designed for the common and equal benefit of all the people of the United States,<sup>7</sup> as well as to create a national economic union.<sup>8</sup>

The principal features of the American system of government established by the United States Constitution include representative government,<sup>9</sup> dual government involving both state and federal aspects,<sup>10</sup> the securing of individual rights

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